

IOWA BIRD LIFE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.

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Meet an Iowa Birder—John Bissell

Robert Cecil

John Bissell is one of those people you wonder how the Iowa Ornithologists' Union did without. Since joining in 2002, he has served the organization almost continuously, holding several offices and most recently as co-editor of *IOU News*. He has also been an eager catalyst for interest in the IOU and Iowa's birds.

John was born in 1973 in St. Joseph, MO but a year later moved to Iowa Falls where his father worked for Iowa Workforce Development. He quickly developed an interest in birds specifically and nature

generally while exploring the woods behind his house. His birding interest was further piqued while visiting his grandparents in Greenfield, Iowa and watching the birds at their feeders. He was impressed with the variety and colors; for him, each of the several species was distinctive. "This ID thing seems pretty easy," he recalls thinking. He brought his interest back home, buying a grocery store feeder and bird seed, and getting free suet at the local Fareway store.

John attended Iowa State University, earning a B.A. in Political Science with a minor in History. As is often the case, college drew his attention away from birding, but after graduation, equipped with a new pair of cheap binoculars, he decided to broaden his birding horizons. The IOU's website was instrumental in stimulating his renewed interest in birding and his involvement in the IOU.

John works for EMC Insurance Companies in Des Moines and is now a supervisor in the subrogation department where he attempts to recover dollars on paid claims if a 3rd party holds any negligence in the claim. His office is located downtown within easy



John Bissell (left) with Jon Dunn at the fall IOU meeting, Centerville, 17 October 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam.

access to Gray's Lake and Waterworks Park and John spends his lunch hours wisely and frequently reports the birds he finds on the Iowa birding listserv.

As with many other birders, he discovered "listing" and the friendly competition side of birding, an affliction he blames on Jay Gilliam. John credits Jay with helping in the pursuit of another of his interest, meteorology, particularly storm chasing and the search for tornados and violent thunderstorms. John notes that his wife Anna thought it was best to put the stop to that after their first child was born. As might be expected, John adapted his interest in meteorology to birding and is especially interested in migration dynamics such as arrival and departure dates, and trying to predict "fallout" conditions. When asked whether he can predict migration based upon weather, he responds that he likes to think he can, "but whenever I think I will nail a prediction, I end up way off. I'm learning as I go." One use of his interest in birding and weather is to listen for the flight calls of nocturnal migrants, which are produced by most passerines. Starting with the CD-ROM *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds* (Evans and O'Brien 2002) he learned thrushes quickly but is finding warblers and sparrows more challenging. John recently recounted his experiences and advice in the *IOU News* (Bissell 2011). He ends the article with "Imagine how many species you could add to your year list just by sitting on your deck at night and listening." In John's case, he now includes on his yard list Virginia Rail, Sora, Black-billed Cuckoo, Scarlet Tanager, and Dickcissel, all species unlikely to be seen in his yard during daylight. John's article, and a nocturnal birding field trip led by Ted Floyd at the recent IOU meeting in Decorah, will probably produce more nocturnal birders who rely upon hearing rather than eyesight.

John also birds with his binoculars. His favorite birding areas are Saylorville Reservoir, Brenton Arboretum, Woodland Mounds State Preserve, and Pilot Knob State Park. John would like to take his interest in birding and photography on the road someday with trips to Florida, Cape May, New Jersey for the fall hawk watch, and Arizona to see hummingbirds. He has taken two winter trips to Duluth, Minnesota, where we saw life birds such as Iceland Gull, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Pine Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbill. He also enjoys traveling to Colorado to visit his sister-in-law, and has picked up several new birds in the Grand Junction area as well as Rocky Mountain National Park.

John's service to the IOU has been invaluable. He has served twice on the Board of Directors, compiles the Iowa Rare Bird Alert, and with his wife Anna edits *IOU News*. In addition to his *IOU News* article on nocturnal birding, he wrote articles on birding Raccoon River Park (Bissell 2007) and about a Snowy Plover he found at Saylorville Reservoir (Bissell 2009), and is a regular on the Saylorville Reservoir Christmas Bird Count. John has also helped others become acquainted with birding. Working with the Des Moines Parks Department, he began lunch hour birding at Gray's Lake every Wednesday. Hosting anywhere between 5 and 50 participants, he discovered that spring waterfowl are the easiest for beginners to view; as the season progresses, migrant passerines are much more difficult to show people. He laughs and says his best bird there, and one his top five "found" birds, was an early Red-necked Grebe. He was the only person in the group that was excited because it was still molting and looked rather drab, not a bird that folks who have never birded before would appreciate. His other favorite "found" birds include the Snowy Plover, a Snowy Egret at Saylorville, and a Short-eared Owl at Brenton Arboretum. Of the birds seen, he notes that Indigo Bunting, Baltimore Oriole, and of course Bald Eagle are always big hits.

John finally ended the outings during the summer birding doldrums. While he isn't sure this has produced any new IOU members, he has encouraged participants to consider it, and will have another chance at recruits if he agrees to resume the outings this fall.

Among the several younger participants at Gray's Lake, he observed that teens seemed to have the most enthusiasm and desire to learn the finer details in bird identification. Meanwhile, John is working to lead his own two kids, 4-year-old Nevin and 7-year-old Drew, into birding. His techniques include having them help with bird feeders, bird counting contests, and "bribery" with a visit to the ice cream shop if they accompany him on trips to Saylorville or to check on his bluebird houses at Brenton Arboretum. He will report to the IOU membership if any of these works.

John credits three people with being the most influential in his birding: his grandmother, Dennis Thompson, and Jay Gilliam, and he also keeps in contact with Aaron Brees and Steve Dinsmore. Jay also inadvertently led John into photography when he saw some of Jay's "fabulous photos." Jay was more than simply an inspiration, however, and helped him get started in photography. John now uses a Canon 20D with a 100-400 mm zoom lens and has branched out into photographing "odes" and "leps" (dragonflies and butterflies) and "any other cool creatures". He further notes, "And while I enjoy teaching new birders basic bird watching skills, I very much enjoy birding with people who know more than I do. It's a better way to learn than any book can provide."

If you're ever out at Saylorville Reservoir or maybe Waterworks Park and you meet an ever-cheerful guy behind binoculars or a camera, you might ask him if he works in subrogation, or you might ask if there're any birds around, but either way you're going to find out if there are any birds around. And if you're not already a birder, be careful—you might soon become one!

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Field Reports—Summer 2011

James J. Dinsmore

Despite flooding in western Iowa and a very hot July, it was an interesting summer with two Accidental and two Casual species found. One new species was added to Iowa's state list (Broad-billed Hummingbird) and Blue Grosbeaks were found in several places outside their usual range.

WEATHER

June rainfall averaged 6.25 inches, 1.61 inches above normal and the 27th wettest June on record. The first week of June was fairly dry, followed by frequent rain through the 22nd and scattered precipitation after that. Southeastern and south-central Iowa had the most rain; both Keosauqua and Bloomfield had their wettest months ever with 16.14 and 14.60 inches of rainfall respectively. It was driest in northeastern Iowa with only 2.39 inches of rain in Cresco.

June temperatures were somewhat warmer than normal, averaging 70.4 degrees or 0.6 degrees above normal and the 53rd warmest June in 139 years of records. The first eight days were quite warm with temperature reaching 100 degrees at several stations on 6th and 7th. The rest of the month was generally cool with a low of 42 degrees at Cresco on 12 June and daytime highs only reaching the 60s on a number of days.

July rainfall totaled 3.37 inches, 0.88 inches below average and the 60th driest July on record. The most extreme rain event occurred on the night of 27 July when 10.6 inches fell at Dubuque leading to extensive local flooding. Almost 10 inches of rain fell near Spirit Lake from 10–15 July, again leading to local flooding. However, much of west-central, central, and southern Iowa was very dry. Only 0.17 inches of rain fell in Fairfield.

July was hot and dry. Statewide temperatures averaged 78.8 degrees, 5.0 degrees above normal, the 7th hottest July on record, and Iowa's hottest July since 1955. High temperatures reached 100 on seven days (18–23 and 27 July) with most of those in south-central or southeastern Iowa and a high of 102 at Keosauqua. The temperature low was 52 at Elkader and Mason City, the second highest minimum temperature for July on record.

BIRDS OF SUMMER

Habitat Conditions

As in several recent summers, flooding again was an issue. This year, it was along the Missouri River and it was caused largely by events far removed from Iowa. In late May and early June, eastern Montana experienced unusually heavy rains in the upper Missouri River drainage. The six large dams and their reservoirs along the Upper Missouri were overwhelmed with the excessive amount of water moving downstream. In addition, a near-record snowpack in the mountains further west, led to even more water moving down the Missouri. By mid June, flooding affected low-lying areas along the Missouri River in Iowa, starting near Hamburg in extreme southwestern Iowa. Breaches in the levees that protect

that area led to more flooding that soon extended north, closing sections of Interstate 29 and flooding large areas of low-lying land. Although most of this land is farmed intensively, the flooding undoubtedly destroyed many nests of ground nesting species such as Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, and Horned Lark as well as causing nest losses for many other species.

The amount of land that was flooded along the Missouri River was huge. Just in hard-hit Fremont County, about 20,000 acres were flooded (Ross Silcock, pers. comm.), and the total for the entire valley in Iowa may have reached 100,000 acres (156 square miles). Much of that is farmland but about 21,000 acres of state and federal wildlife land is located along the Missouri River from Sioux City to the Missouri border and most of that was probably flooded. This includes lowland timber and associated backwater areas that provide habitat for a host of species, most of which could not nest successfully under flood conditions.

Elsewhere, despite the dry July, habitat conditions were fairly good for most species. The continued loss of grasslands remains a concern. More than 100,000 acres were taken out of CRP in fall 2010, about 70,000 acres are due to be lost in 2011, and more than 200,000 acres are slated for loss in 2012. These lands are prime nesting habitat for many grassland birds.

Breeding Species

American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, and Great Egrets nesting on Mississippi River spoil islands in Clinton County had good nesting seasons. Henslow's Sparrows continued to be found at numerous sites, and Clay-colored Sparrows were found in a several counties in northern Iowa. Bald Eagle and Sandhill Crane nesting numbers continue to grow while Peregrine Falcon and Osprey numbers were similar to those in 2010. Trumpeter Swans seem to be established as a nesting species and monitoring has been reduced. Both Least Terns and Piping Plovers seemed to have some nesting success despite the extensive flooding. Also, there were a heartening number of Barn Owls reported although the species still is very rare in Iowa.

Among species that seem to be struggling, Loggerhead Shrikes were found in the same number of counties this year as in 2010 but still far fewer than were found just two decades ago. Cerulean Warblers also seemed to be less common in recent years. Perhaps the group of most concern is the gallinaceous birds. Ring-necked Pheasants populations have declined from 2010 with birds hard to find in some parts of Iowa. Northern Bobwhite are still found in far southern Iowa but clearly their numbers are much reduced. And the small reintroduced population of Greater Prairie-Chickens in and near Ringgold County continues to hold on although its future remains precarious. Finally, there was once again no indication of nesting by Forster's Terns.

Range Extensions

The most impressive species in this category this summer was the influx of Blue Grosbeak reports away from its usual breeding range. In western Iowa, there were several records further east than usual and also a report from Polk County. Most impressive was the number of reports from Hawkeye Wildlife Area in Johnson County where at least seven

different birds were detected. One wonders if these birds were displaced from their usual nesting sites along the Missouri River and ended up dispersing eastward. There was a hint of an eastward movement by Blue Grosbeak last summer (Dinsmore 2010) but this year it bordered on an invasion.

The possibility that the earth's atmosphere is gradually warming and its' possible impacts on various animals and plants has been a topic of much discussion in recent years. Recently, Price (2004) wrote about some possible effects such changes might have on Iowa's avifauna and included some predictions. It is interesting to note that two Iowa species he predicted might expand their nesting range in Iowa, Western Kingbird and Blue Grosbeak, have both shown some evidence of doing that in recent years. And a third, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, which he predicted might eventually nest in Iowa, has been seen in the state each of the last three Junes.

Migrants

For most species, spring migration ended before 1 June and few northbound migrants were reported this summer. Besides the usual late shorebirds, only a few tardy warblers and flycatchers were detected, suggesting that spring migrants moved through rapidly. Likewise, there were few early arriving fall migrants. Unlike recent years when many American White Pelicans and Ring-billed Gulls were in the state by the end of July, this year few had arrived. Forster's Terns were migrating by late July as well as the usual assortment of shorebirds. Other than two Least Flycatchers, there was no evidence of early southbound migrant passerines arriving in July.

Unusual Species

This summer, two Accidental and two Casual species were found. The Accidentals included a brief visit by Iowa's first Broad-billed Hummingbird and the Black Rail that appeared in late May and lingered for a few days in June. The Casual species were a Bewick's Wren and a King Rail. A long list of other interesting species were found this summer: Red-necked Grebe, Western Grebe, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, White-faced Ibis, Swainson's Hawk, American Avocet, Hudsonian Godwit, Red-necked Phalarope, Bonaparte's Gull, White-winged Dove, Long-eared Owl, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Purple Finch. Most stayed only briefly and were seen by only one or two people.

SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Accidental or Casual species, * = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **alt** = alternate (plumage), **A** = area, **imm** = immature, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res**

= reservoir, **se half** = diagonal se half, **SF** = state forest, **SI** = slough, **SP** = state park, **WA** = wildlife area, **yg** = young.

Key to maps: shading = species reported in county. In most cases, the species was probably nesting in the county although evidence was presented only in a few cases.

Greater White-fronted Goose: All: singles 9 Jun in *Hamilton* (SJD), 12 Jun at

Bob Pyle M *Story* (SJD), and 24 Jul in *Boone* (SJD).

Snow Goose: All: one 8 Jun at Buckshot M *Appanoose* (RLC), 2 on 9 Jun at Pickerel L *Buena Vista* (SJD), one 11 Jun at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* (GLV), 3 on 13 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), one 16 Jun in *Cass* (AB), and one 18 Jun in *Franklin* (AB).

Trumpeter Swan: Since 1994, more than 1000 swans have been released in Iowa, and in 2010, for the second straight year, there were 40 swan nesting attempts. The swan reintroduction program has met its original goals, the population appears to be sustainable, and reintroduction efforts are being curtailed (Iowa DNR). In July 2011, 4 swans were released at Wiese Sl *Muscatine* but few such efforts are now being made. This summer, I received reports from 7 counties (DTh, JLF, MP, SJD), an indication of the success of this program.

American Wigeon: All: one male 10–29 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Blue-winged Teal: Two broods 17 Jul at Tomahawk M *Sac* (SJD) were the only broods reported this summer.

Northern Shoveler: All: one 9 Jun in *Pocahontas* (SJD) and 2 on 10, 11 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Northern Pintail: All: one female 1 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Green-winged Teal: All: 2 on 30 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD).

Canvasback: All: one 5 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS) and one 9 Jun at Little Clear L *Pocahontas* (SJD).

Redhead: All: 9 on 8 Jun at Spirit L *Dickinson* (SJD), 13 on 8 Jun at Grover's L *Dickinson* (SJD), and a female 25 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH).

Ring-necked Duck: All: one 5 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS), 4 on 9 Jun at Little Clear L *Pocahontas* (SJD), a male 25 Jun

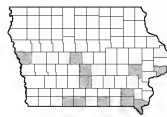
at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH), and one 15 Jul at Forney L *Fremont* (SJD).

Lesser Scaup: All: a male 1 Jun–1 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 4 on 8 Jun at Grover's L *Dickinson* (SJD) and 3 there 19 Jun (LAS), 5 on 9 Jun at Little Clear L *Pocahontas* and one there 27 Jun (SJD), and one 9 Jun in *Pocahontas* (SJD).

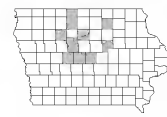
Hooded Merganser: Broods were reported in *Appanoose* (RLC), *Hancock* (PH, MP), *Polk* (DK), and *Tama* (BSc).

Ruddy Duck: All: 11 on 9 Jun at Little Clear L *Pocahontas* (SJD), 2 on 28 Jun at Crystal Hills W.A. *Hancock* (MSIM), one 19 Jul at Bob Pyle M *Story* (SJD), and 5 on 24 Jul at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

Northern Bobwhite: Bobwhite were found in 12 counties, all in the s half of Iowa (m.ob.). This is a modest increase from last year but their populations still seem imperiled in Iowa. The estimated hunting kill in 2010–11 and the recent August roadside counts were the lowest on record (Iowa DNR).



Gray Partridge: All reports were from their traditional strongholds in n-cen and cen Iowa south to *Greene*, *Boone*, and *Story* (JB, SJD, DE, MCK, WO, DTh).



Ring-necked Pheasant: Several observers commented on the scarcity of pheasants. Two who each visited more than 50 atlas blocks during the summer saw only one (TSS) and two (SJD) broods, and a third saw only two pheasants all summer (CRE). The estimated hunting harvest in 2010–11 was the lowest on record and with the severe winter, relatively cold, wet spring, and continued loss of habitat, pheasant populations continue to decline. The August 2011 roadside counts were the lowest on record (Iowa DNR).

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Five adults were found in early August at the Kellerton WA *Ringgold* but no broods were seen. Last spring, 13 males were seen on the leks (SSh, PSc).

Common Loon: All: 2 at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* throughout June and July (JF, BSc), one (basic) 9–12 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and one (basic) 1 Jul near Montezuma *Poweshiek* (DK).

Pied-billed Grebe: Few reports. An active nest at Carney M *Polk* (DA) was near the s edge of its Iowa nesting range.

Red-necked Grebe: All: one 19 Jun at Grover's L *Dickinson* (LAS).

Western Grebe: All: 3 on 5 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS) and one 8 Jun at Spirit L *Dickinson* (SJD).

Double-crested Cormorant: On 20 Jun, 1,300 adults and 602 nests were found on two spoil islands in Pool 13 of the Mississippi R *Clinton* (SJD). A few were seen elsewhere with 11 on 7 Jul in *Iowa* and 13 on 15 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) the most.

American White Pelican: On 20 Jun, 1,200 adults, 950 young, and 265 nests were found on two spoil islands in Pool 13

of the Mississippi R *Clinton* (SJD). The largest summering groups noted were 375 on 9 Jun at Pickerel L *Buena Vista* (SJD) and 165 on 9 Jun at Mud L *Clay* (SJD) but 75 on 10 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* were considered early southbound migrants (MCK). Southbound birds seemed slow in arriving with 185 on 31 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JJD) the largest group reported.

American Bittern: All: singles 3 Jun at Carney M *Polk* (DA) and 19 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD).

Least Bittern: Reports came from 10 counties mostly in cen and n-cen Iowa (m.ob.). All were of singles except for an adult and 2 young found 19 Jul at Anderson L *Hamilton* (SJD).

Great Blue Heron: The only large post-breeding concentration noted was 104 on 15 Jul in *Fremont* (SJD).

Great Egret: A total of 215 adults and 147 nests were found 20 Jun on two spoil islands in Pool 13 of the Mississippi R *Clinton* (SJD). The only other large concentration reported was 75 on 11 Jun at Waubonsie WA *Fremont* (KDy).

Snowy Egret:

All: 3 on 18 Jun at Waubonsie WA *Fremont* (KDy), one 19 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), and 2 on 28 Jul at Green Island WA *Jackson* (JLF).

Little Blue Heron:

All: 4 adults 11 Jun near Waubonsie WA *Fremont* and 20 (16 ad, 2 juvs, 2 calico) there 18 Jun (KDy), an adult 2 Jul in Warren (Curt



American White Pelican fledglings, Pool 13, Clinton, 20 June 2011.
Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

Gracey, ph, fide SJD), and a juv 31 Jul at Colfax WA *Jasper* (SJD).

Cattle Egret: All: ca 300 on 11 Jun at Waubonsie WA *Fremont* but only 7 there 18 Jun (KDy), 18 on 20 Jun on two spoil islands in Pool 13 of the Mississippi River *Clinton* (SJD), 2 on 21 Jun near Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BSc), 2 on 27 Jun near Lake Park *Dickinson* (SJD), one 27 Jun near Laurens *Pocahontas* (SJD), and one 9, 15 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

Green Heron: Up to 6 were reported from 11 counties east of a line from *Worth* to *Madison* to *Monroe* (DA, DC, MSIM, WO, MP).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: All: 3 on 11 Jun at Waubonsie WA *Fremont* (KDy), 2 on 25 Jun at Cedar L *Linn* (JF), 2 on 25 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH), one 26 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), and 2 on 27 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (PH).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: All: one juv 10 Jul n of Hamburg *Fremont* (KDy).

White-faced Ibis: All: one 6 Jun near Elkhart *Polk* (DA), 13 on 15 Jun at Waubonsie WA *Fremont* (KDy), and one 29 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (LRu).

Turkey Vulture: The only report of nesting was near Red Oak *Montgomery* (DCD). Vulture use of communication towers for roosting sites seems to be a growing phenomenon. This year, counts included 122 in McGregor *Clayton* (DA), 70 in Algona *Kossuth* (MCK), and 15 in Cedar Falls *Black Hawk* (MB).

Osprey: A total of 17 nesting pairs was found this summer: Coralville Res-3, Cedar Falls/Waterloo-4, Polk County-3, Linn County-2, near Sergeant Bluff *Woodbury*-2, Don Williams L *Boone*-1, and Spirit Lake-2. In addition, 17 young birds from Minnesota



Great Blue Heron fledgling, Pool 13, Clinton, 20 June 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

and Wisconsin were released at White Rock Conservancy *Guthrie*, Mud L *Dubuque*, Spirit L *Dickinson*, and Annett Nature Center *Warren* (PSc).

Mississippi Kite: All reports were from Iowa's two established sites: one 2 Jun and 18 Jul at Ottumwa *Wapello* (BSc, JLF) and one or 2 from 1 Jun–19 Jul in the Des Moines *Polk* area (JB, DA, EEA, RIC).

Bald Eagle: Iowa's nesting population continues to increase with about 300 active nesting sites known. With the addition of *Grundy*, *Pocahontas*, and *Wright*, the number of counties with known eagle nests now totals 91 (SSh, BEh).

Northern Harrier: One 7 Jun, 6 Jul at Hayden Prairie *Howard* (MSIM) and a male 12 Jun at Jackson Junction *Winneshiek* (DC) were the only reports.

Cooper's Hawk: Singles were found in *Chickasaw*, *Clayton*, *Jasper*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, *Sac*, *Story*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob.) but they probably nested in all of those counties. A nest with 4 young was found 3 Jul at Grimes *Polk* (DTh).

Red-shouldered Hawk: Fewer reports than usual: a pair 29 Jun at Cedar Bend *Savannah* *Black Hawk* (TSS), one 30 Jun at

Donnellson Unit *Lee* (MP), and singles 4 Jul at Croton and Donnellson units *Lee* (CRE).

Broad-winged Hawk: All: one 1, 6 Jun at Grammer Grove P *Marshall* (MP), one 9 Jun at Marble L *Dickinson* (SJD), a pair 15 Jun in Des Moines *Polk* (DA), one 4 Jul at Ankeny *Polk* (DK), and one 17 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (CRE).

Swainson's Hawk: One 5 Jun at Split Rock P *Chickasaw* (TSS) was the only report.

Peregrine Falcon: This year, 15 peregrine territories were active, the same as in 2010. However, only 8 were successful and produced 18 young, down somewhat from 10 successful nests that produced 22 young in 2010. Successful nests were at Burlington (2 yg), Cedar Rapids (4 yg), Chillicothe (3 yg), Clinton (2 yg), Davenport (1 yg), Des Moines (2 pairs, 5 yg), and Dubuque (1 yg). Unfortunately none of the nests near the Mississippi R between Lansing and McGregor were successful this year (PSc).

BLACK RAIL: One found in late May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (Edwards 2011) called persistently through 2 Jun and then was not heard again (JLF, *AMJ).

KING RAIL: All: one 19 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (*SJD).

Virginia Rail: All: one 12 Jun at Anderson L *Hamilton* (SJD).

Sora: All: singles 9 Jun at Meinking M *Dickinson* (SJD) and 17 Jul at S Twin L *Calhoun* (SJD).

Common Gallinule: All: singles 19 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS), 22 Jun at Goose L *Clinton* (JWR), 25 Jun at Bob Pyle M *Story* (SJD), and 2 on 28 Jul at Green Island WA *Jackson* (JLF).

American Coot: Few reports. The 26 juvs reported 24 Jul at Rush L *Palo Alto* (LAS) was the only indication of nesting. Five on 15 Jul in *Fremont* (SJD) was the southernmost report.

Sandhill Crane: In 2010, evidence



of nesting was noted in 21 counties, mainly in ne Iowa (Iowa DNR). This year I received reports from 11 counties including broods in *Polk*, *Winnebago*, and *Washington* (BE, LR, SJD), the latter a new county record. The most were 12 (including 3 family groups) 30 Jul at Cone M *Louisa* (JJD), and 18 (all adults) 31 Jul at Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD). Cranes are doing well in Iowa.

Semipalmated Plover: First: One 22 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Most: 43 on 24 Jul at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (SJD).

Piping Plover: All: 2 on 5 Jun at MidAmerican Energy ponds *Pottawattamie* (DTh), and 4 adults and a brood of 4 there 15 Jul indicate some breeding success this year (SJD). Away from the Missouri R were singles 20 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 23 Jul at Hoosier Cr *Johnson* (JF).

Killdeer: Most: ca 900 were at Lizard L *Pocahontas* 20 Jul (MCK) and 334 on 20 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

American Avocet: All: 3 on 5 Jul at Cedar L *Linn* (BSc)[third earliest], 5 on 21 Jul and 7 on 23, 24 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), one 21 Jul at Hoosier Creek *Johnson* (JF), and 3 on 24 Jul at L Rathbun *Appanoose* (RLC).

Spotted Sandpiper: The one or 2 found in *Cedar*, *Clayton*, *Madison* and *Mitchell* (KW, DA) probably were breeding. A brood was at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 19 Jun (CRE). Most: 16 on 24 Jul at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (SJD).

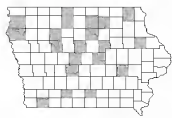
Solitary Sandpiper: First: one 7 Jul in *Cedar* (SJD); Most: 14 on 20 Jul at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (MCK).

Greater Yellowlegs: First: 2 on 15 Jul in *Fremont* (SJD).

Willet: All: one 11 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* and 3 there 21 Jul (JF), and one 22 Jul at Three Mile L *Union* (SJD).

in *Kossuth* (MCK). First southbound: 2 on 7 Jul in *Calhoun* (SJD). Most: 200 on 20 Jul at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (MCK).

Dunlin: One 9 Jun at Barringer Sl *Clay* (SJD) was late.



Stilt Sandpiper: Last: 2 on 9 Jun at Barringer Sl *Clay* (SJD)[ties third latest]. First: 8 on 20 Jul at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (MCK). Most: 34 on 24 Jul at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (SJD).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: All: 2 on 24 Jul at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (SJD) and several 29–31 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* with a peak of 36 on 30 Jul (JF).

Short-billed Dowitcher: All: 3 on 20 Jul at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (MCK) and 3 on 22 Jul at Summit L *Union* (SJD).

American Woodcock: All: singles 5 Jun at Eldon WA Davis (MSIM), 7 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA Linn (BSc), 27 Jun in Cerro Gordo (PH), one found dead 7 Jul at Red Feather Prairie Polk (DTh), and 10 Jul at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF). The five reports are the most ever for summer.

Wilson's Phalarope: All: one 24 Jul at Lizard L Pocahontas (SJD).

Red-necked Phalarope: All: one 21
Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF)[second
earliest].

Franklin's Gull: All: 3 on 8 Jun at Spirit L Dickinson (SJD), 2 on 8 Jun at Pick-
erel L Buena Vista (SJD), and 5 on 9 Jun at
Trumbull L Clay (SJD).

Bonaparte's Gull: On 20 Jun, 4 first-alt birds were on a spoil island in Pool 13 of the Mississippi R *Clinton* (SJD). This is only the sixth summer report in the last 20 years.

Ring-billed Gull: Both of the state's breeding colonies were active. At Meinking M *Dickinson* on 9 Jun there were 345 adults, 135 nests, and 40 chicks (SJD). On 20 Jun, 326 birds were on a spoil island in Pool 13 of the Mississippi R *Clinton* (SJD); on 8 Jul a nest with 2 eggs was seen there (Mike Grif-

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fin fide SJD). Away from the colonies the only birds seen were 2 on 21 Jul (DTh) and 24 Jul (BE) at Saylorville Res Polk and one 29 Jul at Fort Madison Lee (JJD).

Herring Gull: All: one first-alternate bird 8 Jun at Spirit L, *Dickinson* (SJD). None were seen 20 Jun on the spoil island in Pool 13 of the Mississippi R Clinton where they nested last summer (SJD).

Least Tern: All: 10 on 5 Jun at MidAmerican Energy ponds *Pottawattamie* (DTh) and on 15 Jul 34 adults, 4 nests with eggs, and 4 broods were present (SJD). One 19 Jul at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SJD) was away from its usual range.

Caspian Tern: All: 2 on 2 Jun at Sand L *Marshall* (MP) and 3 on 24, 25 Jun at Cedar L *Linn* (BSc, JF).

Black Tern: The only reports of nesting were 8 adults and 2 nests 9 Jun at Meinking M *Dickinson* (SJD), 12 including some carrying food on 25 Jun at Eagle L

Hancock (PH), and a nest 22 Jul at Welch L *Dickinson* (DCH). The 30 on 9 Jun at Grover's L *Dickinson* (SJD) were suggestive of nearby nesting. The 28 on 1 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) were late north-bound migrants.

Forster's Tern: For the fourth straight year, there were no reports of nesting. The only report from historical nesting areas was of 5 on 23 Jul at Spring Run A *Dickinson* (DCH). Southbound migrants included 7 on 21 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh), one 24 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and one 28 Jul at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BSc). Most: 18 on 30 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Now found statewide, this species is probably least common in ne Iowa. Reports from that section of the state came from *Allamakee*, *Chickasaw*, *Clayton*, *Delaware*, and *Wineshiek* (SJD, PH, DA).

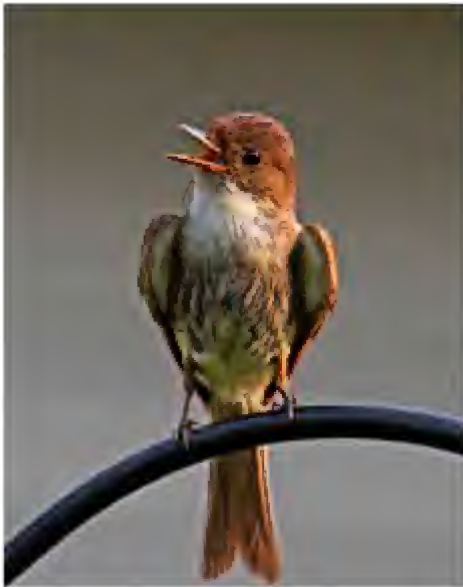
White-winged Dove: All: 2 on 18, 19 Jun at a feeder in Garrison *Benton* (*Alan Kakac) and one 22, 23 Jun, 15 Jul in Shenandoah *Page* (KDy).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Reported from 18 counties, all in cen or the e third of Iowa (m.ob.). Most reports were of one or 2 birds but at least 10 were heard 4 Jun at Bell's Mill *Hamilton* (MCK).

Black-billed Cuckoo: From 1–3 were reported from *Black Hawk*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Dallas*, *Greene*, *Hamilton*, *Johnson*, *Kossuth*, *Linn*, *Mitchell*, *Page*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob.). This species continues to be much less commonly reported than in previous years.

Barn Owl: Evidence of nesting was reported in *Clarke*, *Decatur*, *Lucas*, *Marion*, *Tama*, and *Wayne* (BEh, PSc), more than most recent summers.

Long-eared Owl: The report of one heard on 16 Jun at Backbone SP *Delaware* (KW-details) is the first summer report



Eastern Phoebe, Boone, 5 June 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

in more than 20 years. Long-eared Owls should nest in Iowa at least occasionally.

Common Nighthawk: Few reports of this typically underreported species. It appears to still be reasonably common, especially in urban areas.

Chuck-will's-widow: All: one 6, 7 Jun at Whitebreast Unit *Lucas* (RIA, PHA, DTh).

Eastern Whip-poor-will: From 1–3 were found in eight counties (RLC, LGD, DTh, BSc, KW, MP), mostly in the se quarter of Iowa. There were no reports from the loess hills or northeastern Iowa, areas where the species has been common.

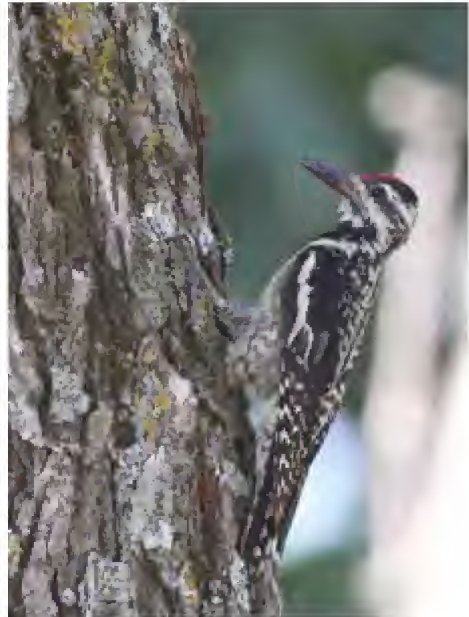
Chimney Swift: Only one report (MB) but no one indicated any concerns about its numbers. It is difficult to assess its populations but presumably it still is fairly common in urban areas.

BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD: An adult male found in late Jun at Margaret Berns' home in Charles City *Floyd* was viewed by a few birders 25 Jun (*EM-ph, *PH-ph, *RG). It is Iowa's first record of this western species.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: This species continues to be reasonably common with reports from 13 counties in the e half of Iowa (MP, DA, MSIM, WO, DC). The most reported was 12 on 17 Jun near Bluffton *Winneshiek* (DC). An active nest was found at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Reported from seven counties mainly in ne Iowa with evidence of nesting noted in *Clayton*, *Dela-ware*, and *Kossuth* (DA, KW, MCK). Other reports came from *Floyd*, *Mitchell*, *Scott*, and *Winneshiek* (RG, WMZ, DC).

Pileated Woodpecker: Few reports. One or 2 were found in *Clayton*, *Howard*, *Lee*, *Tama*, and *Winneshiek* (DA, MSIM, DTh, MP, SJD), all within its usual range.



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker near nest, Clayton, 8 July 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

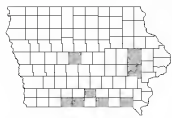
Olive-sided Flycatcher: Last: Singles 11 Jun at Banner Lake SP *Warren* (JS) and 16 Jun at the Fox and Sac Overlook *Hardin* (MP-details)[record latest].

Acadian Flycatcher: Up to 5 were found in 13 counties, mainly in the se half of Iowa (m.ob.). One 17 Jul at McDonald Greenbelt *Sac* (SJD) was out of its usual range.

Alder Flycatcher: Last: 2 on 2 Jun in *Kossuth* (MCK) and 3 on 4 Jun at Bell's Mill/Boone Fork *Hamilton* (MCK).

Willow Flycatcher: Up to 7 were found in *Chickasaw*, *Clayton*, *Grundy*, *Hardin*, *Howard*, *Jasper*, *Jefferson*, *Johnson*, *Monroe*, *Polk*, and *Winneshiek* (MP, DA, MSIM, DTh, DCP, CRE, RLC).

Least Flycatcher: All: 3 on 1 Jun and one 2 Jun in *Algona Kossuth* (MCK), one 19



Jun near Volga *Clayton* (DA), one 11, 23, 24 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE, JF), and 2 on 31 Jul in *Page* (BSc). The early June birds are late migrants and the late July birds early fall migrants. The mid/late June birds may have been either migrants or nesters.

Western Kingbird: Most reports were from its usual hangouts in *Mills* and *Pottawatamie* (DTh, SJD) in w Iowa and in *Polk* (RIC, RIA, PHA, DA, BE, SJD) where it seems to be well established. At least 4 pairs nested in Shenandoah *Page* this summer (KDY). One 1 Jun near Ridgeway *Winneshiek* (EB, DC) was unexpected.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: Two reports: one 3 Jun n of West Branch *Cedar* (Dave Rozinek-ph, fide CRE) and one 4 Jun s of Algona *Kossuth* (*MCK).

Loggerhead Shrike: All: Up to 5 were found in nine counties, mostly in the w half of Iowa (m.ob.). A brood 31 Jul in *Page* (BSc) was the only report of nesting.



White-eyed Vireo: All: 2 on 1 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BSc), and singles 5 Jun in *Warren* (JS), 14 Jun and 4 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (DTh, CRE), 14 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (DTh), 16 Jun at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP), 25 Jun in *Johnson* (CRE), 7, 31 Jul in *Jefferson* (DCP), and 30 Jul at Starr's Cave *Des Moines* (JJD). The most was 3 on 30 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (MP).

Bell's Vireo: Up to 8 were found in 22 counties (m.ob.) spanning most of Iowa. This species is secretive and habitat specific but is found through most of the state.



Yellow-throated Vireo: Up to 7 were reported from *Appanoose*, *Clayton*, *Kossuth*, *Mitchell*, and *Winneshiek* (RLC, DA, MCK, DC). One 4 Jun at Broken Kettle Grasslands

Plymouth (GLV) was near the nw edge of its Iowa range.

Red-eyed Vireo: Few reports but presumably still common in suitable wooded habitat throughout Iowa.

Black-billed Magpie: All: one 1, 4 Jun at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* (EEA, GLV).

Purple Martin: Few colonies were reported, and one observer said they were missing from Cedar Falls (MB).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: The 180 noted 9 Jul in *Clayton* seemed to be an early post-breeding concentration (DA).

Bank Swallow: A colony of 60 was found 14 Jun at Cedar Valley P *Cedar* (KW).

Cliff Swallow: The only sizeable colonies reported were 220 birds 9 Jun on the Turkey R *Clayton* (DA) and 210 birds 10 Jul on Sny McGill Creek *Clayton* (DA).

Brown Creeper: One 12 Jun at Cedar Valley P *Cedar* (KW) was away from the Mississippi R bottomlands where it is most likely to be found in summer.

Carolina Wren: Fewer records than most years: an imm 12 Jun in Indianola *Warren* (JS), 2 on 8 Jul at Backbone SP *Delaware* (SJD), and one 31 Jul at Ames *Story* (HZ).

BEWICK'S WREN: All: one 10, 11, 17 Jun near Kalona *Johnson* (JLF, *CRE, RIA, PHA) was one of only a handful of recent Iowa records away from its usual hangout near Argyle in *Lee*.

Sedge Wren: Up to 6 were reported from 14 counties mainly in the se half of Iowa with reports from four counties adjacent to the Missouri border (m.ob.). One wonders if birds found 26 Jul in *Van Buren* (JWR) and 31 Jul in *Page* (BSc) are part of a recently detected mid-summer southward movement by this species.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Up to 7 were

found in 14 counties east of a line from *Kossuth* to *Boone* to *Jefferson* (m.ob.) and all in areas where this species is established.

Veery: All: one 6 Jun at Dows Preserve *Linn* (BSc), 2 males 18 Jun at Holst SF *Boone* (JS), and 2 on 18 Jun at Big Grove Preserve *Johnson* (CRE).

Swainson's Thrush: One 2 Jun at A.A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK) was the only report.

Wood Thrush: Up to 3 were found in 10 counties east of a line from *Kossuth* to *Story* to *Van Buren* (m.ob.). One 9 Jul near the Big Sioux R *Plymouth* (BFH) was far west of all other reports, and 22 on 8 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SJD) were by far the most reported.

Northern Mockingbird: The only reports came from three corners of the state; one 29 Jun near Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP), 3 on 5 Jul near Farragut *Fremont* (KDy), and one 22 Jul at Spillville *Winneshiek* (LR).

Cedar Waxwing: Up to 8 were found in *Cedar*, *Clayton*, *Delaware*, *Fayette*, *Howard*, *Johnson*, *Mitchell*, *Muscatine*, *Polk*, *Story*, and *Winneshiek* (KW, DA, RG, MSIM, DTh, WO), all in the e half of Iowa.

Ovenbird: Reported from only *Allamakee*, *Black Hawk*, *Kossuth*, *Marshall*, *Van Buren*, and *Winneshiek* (SJD, TSS, MCK, MP, MSIM) but presumably it is still found in large wooded tracts throughout Iowa. The 14 found 9 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SJD) gives an indication of how abundant it can be.

Worm-eating Warbler: All: Singles 14 Jun and 13 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (DTh, JWR).

Louisiana Waterthrush: Underreported: The only report was one 7 Jun at Lucas Unit *Lucas* (DTh).

Blue-winged Warbler: All: 4 singing males 1 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BSc), 2 on 1, 16 Jun at Pine Creek A *Winneshiek* (MSIM), one 14 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee*

(DTh), 2 on 18 Jun at Big Grove Preserve *Johnson* (CRE), one 4 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE), one 9 Jul in *Clayton* (DA), one 9 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SJD), and one 10 Jul in Bloody Run P *Clayton* (DA).

Black-and-white Warbler: Last: one 4 Jun in *Hamilton* (MCK) and one 8 Jun at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK). Singles 11 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE) and 18 Jun at Sharon Bluffs SP *Appanoose* (RLC) may have been summering.

Prothonotary Warbler: Up to 3 were found in *Black Hawk*, *Johnson*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, *Tama*, and *Warren* (DE, CRE, MCK, BE, SJD, JS) where it is expected. Birds near Perry *Dallas* (JB) and near Bradgate *Humboldt* (JN) were at sites where it is less likely to be found.

Tennessee Warbler: Last: singles 2 Jun in Johnston *Polk* (DTh), Solon *Johnson* (CRE), and Algona *Kossuth* (MCK).

Connecticut Warbler: All: one heard 16 Jun at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE-details) was record latest.

Kentucky Warbler: All: one 4 Jun in *Warren* (JS), one 14 Jun at the Croton Unit *Lee* (DTh), one 29, 30 Jun at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP), 2 on 30 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (MP), 3 on 4 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE), 2 on 9 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SJD), and one 15 Jul at West Oak Forest Mills (SJD).

Hooded Warbler: All: one 6 Jun at Chichaqua A *Polk* (DA), a male 7 Jun at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (DK), and singles 14 and 30 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (DTh, MP).

American Redstart: Reports came from 15 counties mainly in the ne quarter of Iowa (m.ob.) but it is probably found in suitable wooded habitat throughout Iowa. Counts of 23 on 30 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD), 43 on 8 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SJD), and 19 on 10 Jul at Bloody Run P *Clayton* (DA) indicate how abundant it can be.



Dickcissel, Boone, 16 June 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

Cerulean Warbler: All: one 3 Jun at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP), one 14 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (DTh), 2 on 15 Jun at Bells Mill *Hamilton* (MCK), one 18 Jun at Ledges SP *Boone* (JS), 2 on 9 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SJD), one 9 Jul near Elkader *Clayton* (DA), and another 10 Jul in *Clayton* (DA). Edwards commented that he could not find any in *Johnson* this summer.

Northern Parula: All: a transient male 19 Jun in *Johnston Polk* (DTh), 6 on 30 Jun at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP), 3 on 30 Jun in *Lee* (MP), and one 21 Jul at Jester P *Polk* (DTh).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: All: 2 singing males 7 Jun at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (DK), one 8 Jul near Elkader *Clayton* (SJD), and one 10 Jul in *Clayton* (DA).

Yellow-throated Warbler: Mostly singles were found in *Allamakee*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Polk*, and *Van Buren* (SJD, CRE, MP).

Yellow-breasted Chat: From 1–3 were found in *Appanoose*, *Clarke*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Mahaska*, *Van Buren*, and *Warren* (m.ob.), all in se and s-cen Iowa where it traditionally is found.

Eastern Towhee: The only reports were

from *Allamakee*, *Appanoose*, *Clayton*, *Fayette*, and *Winneshiek* (RLC, DA, MSIM) but the 21 found 9 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SJD) indicate how common it can be in good habitat.

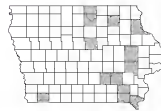
Clay-colored Sparrow: As usual, most reports were near Iowa's n border: 3 on 7 Jun at Hayden Prairie *Howard* (MSIM), one 11 Jun at Volga River RA *Fayette* (MSIM), 3 on 12 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (PH), one 19 Jun at Freda Haffer Kettlehole *Dickinson* (LAS), and one 10 Jul in *Chickasaw* (PH). A territorial bird 13 Jul in *Audubon* was far south of its usual

range (SJD).

Lark Sparrow: Up to 5 were found in *Boone*, *Chickasaw*, *Clayton*, *Fayette*, *Grundy*, *Hamilton*, *Hardin*, *Johnson*, *Kossuth*, *Madison*, *Polk*, and *Poweshiek* (m.ob.), typical of the scattered distribution of this species across Iowa.

Grasshopper Sparrow: Up to 5 were found in 10 counties, mostly in e Iowa (m.ob.), an underrepresentation of its statewide distribution.

Henslow's Sparrow: Birds were found in 13 counties. Other than 2 on 31 Jul in *Page* (BSc), all were in the e half of Iowa. On 9 Jul, 28 were found in a BBA block in *Clayton* (DA), indicating how abundant it can be in good habitat.



Swamp Sparrow: Few reports: singles 8 Jul in *Black Hawk* and *Buchanan* (SJD) were both near the s edge of its Iowa nesting range.

White-crowned Sparrow: One 19, 21 Jun in *Oxford Johnson* (Mark Snyder fide JB, ph) was the fourth summer record and the first since 2003.

Dark-eyed Junco: One 1 Jun near

Ridgeway *Winneshiek* (DC-details) is the first summer record since 1999.

Summer Tanager: Up to 5 were found in *Clayton, Hamilton, Johnson, Lee, Mills, Polk,* and *Van Buren* (m.ob.), all sites where it is expected. Single males 6 Jun at Grammer Grove P *Marshall* (MP) and 16 Jun at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP) were unexpected.

Scarlet Tanager: Up to 4 were found in 13 counties east of a line from *Kossuth* to *Greene* to *Van Buren*, all in areas where it is established (MP, DA, SJD, MCK, WMZ, DC). Two 17 Jul at McDonald Greenbelt *Sac* (SJD) seemed to be at a new site. The 14 counted 8 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SJD) were the most.



Blue Grosbeak: As usual, a few were found along Iowa's w border and in adjacent counties to the east. This year birds 13, 15 Jul in *Audubon* and *Cass* (SJD) were further east than normal as was one 20 Jul at Saylorsville Res *Polk* (SJD). One 14 Jun and a pair 4 Jul at the Croton Unit *Lee* (DTh, CRE) were at its traditional se Iowa site but another 29 Jun near L Sugema *Van Buren* (MP) was at a new site. One was found 11 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE, JF, JLF), 2 more nearby on 19 Jun (CRE), and eventually at least 7 birds were found (JF, CRE). One wonders if the flooding in w Iowa had anything to do with this influx.

Dickcissel: Few mentioned this species but it seems to continue to thrive throughout Iowa. At least 28 were found 6 Jun on a Breeding Bird Atlas block near Elkhart *Polk* (DA), an indication of its abundance in good habitat.

Bobolink: Few reports but like the Dickcissel, Bobolinks seem to continue to thrive in Iowa's grasslands. The 8 found 14 Jun near L Sugema *Van Buren* (DTh) were the most and were near the Missouri border where this species is uncommon.

Western Meadowlark: One 16 Jun was at its usual e Iowa hangout near Davenport *Scott* (WMZ).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Two on 4 Jul at Goose L *Clinton* (BSc) were near the se edge of this species range in e Iowa. Other reports were from sites where it is regular.

Great-tailed Grackle: Other than a male 12 Jun in s *Warren* (JS), all reports were from known sites for this species: one 5 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS), 2 on 30 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (SJD), and 3 on 28 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DTh). The spread of this species through Iowa over the past several decades seems to have stalled.

Orchard Oriole: Up to 6 were found in 15 counties (m.ob.). Surprisingly there were no reports from far w Iowa where it usually is common. The Missouri R flooding may have had something to do with that.

Purple Finch: All: one 4, 5 Jun in Davenport *Scott* (WMZ-details).

Pine Siskin: All: one 23 Jul at a feeder in Ottosen *Humboldt* (JN).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: Two pairs in nest boxes in Marengo *Iowa* 23 Jun (KW) were near the nw edge of its known Iowa range. Elsewhere there were several reports from Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE, DA, SJD) and from near Argyle and Donnellson Unit in *Lee* (MP).

COMMENT

This report depends upon the information that is submitted by observers around the state. This year I received about 1,050 reports from 51 people, about the same as last year. I suspect that the extremely hot weather this summer kept some people out of the field. The number of species covered in this report is 162, somewhat more than the 157 in last year's report and close to the average of about 165 species. Another 29 species that are common



American White Pelicans, Eagle L, Hancock, 25 June 2011. Photograph by Paul Hertz, Mason City, IA.



*Great Egret
fledgling, Pool 13,
Clinton, 20 June
2011. Photograph
by Stephen J. Dins-
more, Ames, IA.*



*Juvenile Bald Eagle, MidAmerican Energy
ponds, Pottawattamie, 15 July 2011. Photo-
graph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Mississippi Kite, Ottumwa, Wapello, 2
Jun 2011. Photograph by Linda Rudolph,
Coralville, IA.*



Great Crested Flycatcher, Johnson, 25 June 2011. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.



Tree Swallow, Boone, 13 June 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



Lark Sparrow feeding a fledgling, Boone, 16 June 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



Least Tern, MidAmerican Energy ponds, Pottawattamie, 15 July 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

statewide were reported to the data base but are not included in this report. Overall, there were lots of good sightings, and it is apparent that summer is a good time to be in the field. As always, I am indebted to those of you who sent in your reports. I hope that even more do so in 2012.

Careful readers will notice a few changes in the order in which species are listed and also in the name of one species. Based on recent information, much of it molecular, our understanding of the relationships of the various species of new world warblers has changed drastically and hence their order of listing as well. Rather than starting with Blue-winged Warbler and ending with Yellow-breasted Chat, Iowa's warblers now start with Ovenbird and end with the chat. Also, the bird formerly known as Common Moorhen (and before that as Common Gallinule) is again known as Common Gallinule. Stay tuned as there will be many more changes, both in bird names and in their order of listing, in the coming years.

CONTRIBUTORS

Danny Akers	DA	Ankeny	Ann Johnson	AMJ	Norwalk
Pam H. Allen	PHA	W Des Moines	Matt C. Kenne	MCK	Algona
Reid I. Allen	RIA	W Des Moines	Darwin Koenig	DK	Ankeny
Eugene Armstrong	EEA	Van Meter	Corey Lange	CL	Lenox
Matthew Baumann	MB	Robins	Ellen Montgomery	EM	Mason City
Ellen Bell	EB	Ridgeway	Jacob Newton	JN	Ottosen
John Bissell	JB	Grimes	Iowa Department of Natural Resources/Multiple		
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James Fuller	JLF	Iowa City	Gerald Von Ehwegen	GLV	Sioux City
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Doug C. Harr	DCH	Ogden	Hank Zaletel	HZ	Nevada
Paul Hertzfel	PH	Mason City	Walter Zuurdeeg	WDZ	Davenport
Bill F. Huser	BFH	S Sioux City, NE			

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Broad-billed Hummingbird in Floyd County

Ellen Montgomery and Paul Hertzel



Figure 1. Male Broad-billed Hummingbird, Charles City, Floyd, 25 June 2011. Photograph by Paul Hertzel.

On 24 June 2011 Margaret Berns noticed an unusual hummingbird visiting a feeder at her home in Charles City in Floyd County. It was not like any of the scores of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds she was accustomed to seeing in her yard. This bird did not have white undersides and was a darker, bluish-green color from head to tail. The blue coloration was particularly vivid around the face and throat. In addition, and perhaps most outstanding, was the bright, reddish-orange coloration on the basal half of the bill. Margaret consulted

her field guides and judged the bird to be a male Broad-billed Hummingbird (Figure 1).

The next day, Saturday, 25 June, Margaret drove to Mason City to inform her friend, Ellen Montgomery, of the presence of the unusual hummingbird. Ellen is an experienced birder who owns and operates the Basic Birder retail store in Mason City. She often gets reports of strange and sometimes extinct birds, and so she has learned to cross-examine the source carefully. Margaret answered all of Ellen's questions so well Ellen felt she had to drive to Charles City to see the bird for herself. Arriving at the Berns' home in late after-

noon, Ellen soon encountered the hummingbird which was appearing briefly about every ten minutes. She began photographing the bird at each visit and confirmed the identification by inspecting the images. She immediately called three or four other people but made contact with only one, Paul Hertz. He arrived in early evening and continued the watch, taking additional photos, and waiting for two other people to arrive. Rita Goranson and Curt Nelson made it to Margaret's home just before sunset. After returning home, Hertz posted a report of the bird on the Iowa birding listserve. The next morning, many people arrived to view the hummingbird, but it did not reappear. Margaret continued to watch for it in the following weeks, but to no avail.

This record of Broad-billed Hummingbird is the first for the state of Iowa. The species has been seen only rarely in the Midwest, with scattered records from Ontario, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Kansas. These include two other summer records: 1–7 June 1996 in Keweenaw, Michigan, and 11–13 July 2000 in Kent, Michigan.

LITERATURE CITED

Domagalski, R. 2010. Midcontinent Rare Bird Records, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology website <http://wsobirds.org/files/midcontinent_rare_bird_records_2010.pdf>.

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Book Review

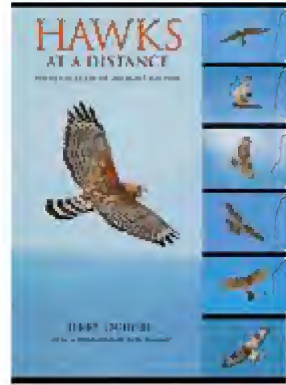
Tyler M. Harms

Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors by Jerry Ligouri (Foreword by Pete Dunne). 2011. 190 pp., color photographs, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, \$19.95 (paperback).

Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors, written by an experienced hawk watcher, is a guide to identifying hawks at distances beyond the skill of untrained, or even trained, eyes. Jerry Ligouri was a hawk watcher at Cape May Bird Observatory from 1993–1997 and, in this guide, he shares tips and tricks for identifying raptors at different angles and under varying light conditions, all at far distances. If you are looking for a guide that provides stunning color photographs that illustrate plumage characteristics close up, this is not the tool for you. This guide provides several photographs of those frustrating views of raptors that birders experience on a regular basis. The good part: it provides informa-

tion for improving your identification of those frustrating hawks!

The guide begins with a nice introduction that provides a broad background on identifying and watching raptors. One thing that I found particularly useful about the introduction is that it includes a list of color morph terminology. This not only helps the novice birder better understand subsequent species' descriptions, but also provides a nice review of terminology that experienced birders should know but may have forgotten. Another helpful part of the introduction is the inclusion of photographs illustrating the different flight positions of raptors. A drawback of the introduction is the migration timetable included at the end. It is relatively difficult to ascertain the specific dates of each species' peak migration. For example, readers may have difficulty determining whether spring migration of the Broad-winged Hawk peaks during late April or early May, and the exact dates are difficult to establish. It might be better to list the exact dates of peak migration for each species.



Following the introduction, the guide launches into the species accounts starting with the *Accipiters* and ending with the vultures, eagles, and Osprey. The first noticeable drawback of the guide is that the species accounts are not in taxonomic order, making it difficult to find species quickly. Each group of species accounts starts with an overall introduction that provides general characteristics of the species included in that group, followed by detailed accounts for each species. The important identification characteristics are in boldface text, which I find beneficial when determining the best characteristics to look for in the field. Each account also includes a plethora of photos in different flight positions and various light conditions, providing helpful examples of how each species appears in the field. Because this guide was created for the specific purpose, it does not include any general information that other guides provide, such as a range map or habitat information. This is nice because it allows more room for photographic examples. The guide closes with several pages that provide silhouettes of each of the common migrant raptors. I thought these illustrations were beneficial, but wish they had been included in the respective species account rather than at the end. Having information in different places in the book inconveniences the reader.

This is probably not the field guide for you if you are seeking a guide that provides an “up close and personal” view of each species. This reference was created for the specific purpose of providing helpful tips for identifying migrating raptors, making it different from other guides geared towards providing more general information for each species. I would not recommend this field guide to the novice birder trying to learn the basics of bird identification, but it is a necessary “tool in the toolbox” for any birder wishing to improve their raptor identification skills.

1517 Stafford Ave, Ames, IA 50010

Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*

James J. Dinsmore

The December 1961 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* started with a challenge from long-time Iowa birder William Youngworth. He listed 10 bird species that formerly were found in Iowa or that nested in nearby states and suggested that Iowans try to find them in Iowa. In the ensuing 50 years, the results have been pretty meager. Of the 10, one (Townsend's Solitaire) is regular in winter, a second (Prairie Warbler) is a rare visitor to Iowa and has nested at least once, two (Yellow-throated Warbler and Hooded Warbler) nest regularly, three have visited the state but not nested (Lazuli Bunting, Painted Bunting, and Black-headed Grosbeak), one nested until the early 1980s but no longer nests (Say's Phoebe), and the last two (Bachmann's Sparrow and Carolina Chickadee) have never been reported in Iowa.

The fall meeting at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge near Titonka was attended by 101 individuals who found 89 species on the field trips. The report indicated that the group had an active program for the event. A new feature for the journal, a summary of bird banding in Iowa in 1961 by Dean Roosa, reported on the banding efforts of 16 active banders. They banded more than 5,000 birds of 135 species during the year. Interestingly, the most-banded species was Chimney Swift (!) with White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco next in line. The banding report persisted in the journal for a number of years.

The field reports section, compiled by Woodward Brown, began to look more familiar with species groups (waterfowl, hawks, etc) lumped together into a paragraph of text. This format was used for about the next 20 years. Among the short notes, J. Donald Gillaspie reported that he located a Yellow Rail when he was plowing a weedy field near Lamoni. Similar farm activities have produced a number of reports of this secretive species in recent years.

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Iowa Ornithologists' Union Budget Meeting

12 December 2011

The IOU budget meeting was held via teleconference again this year. President Paul Roisen called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Also in attendance were Tom Schilke, Vice President; Cathy Konrad, Secretary; Doug Hunt, Treasurer; board members Don Brown, Keith Dyche, Jay Gilliam, and Karen Viste-Sparkman; and committee chairs and members Doug Harr, Ann Johnson, Denny Thompson, and Hank Zaletel.

Board action by e-mail prior to the meeting: Ann Johnson requested access to the IOU debit card that was set up for president and treasurer. Ann needs to set up automatic pay for the various website needs such as tools or domain names and hosting sites. These need to be maintained in a timely manner. Five board members and officers responded and voted 5-0 to allow Ann Johnson, as webmaster, to use IOU debit card.

Formulation of 2012 Budget: Treasurer Doug Hunt previously sent budget revenue and expenditures for 2011, current as of 30 November 2011. Based on 2011 actual revenues and expenditures, committee requests, and anticipated income and operating expenses, the 2012 budget was formulated.

REVENUES

Dues: Proposed income of \$14,000, which remains unchanged from 2011.

Donations: While 2010 was an exceptionally good year for this line item (\$2,243 actual), the recommended line item proposed is \$1,500.

Meeting and Bird Trips: These have been break even items in the past and proposed to continue.

Sales: Recommended \$500 for regular and \$100 for online sales.

Total interest income: Treasurer Hunt proposed \$550.

Transfer from General Operation Fund Savings: \$6,986 to balance the budget.

Total Operating Revenue budgeted: \$23,636.00.

EXPENDITURES

Publications: Ann Johnson presented a Publications budget request of \$15,926. Ann requested \$1,200 for new software needed to upgrade the website. Other components of the budget were: *IOU News*, \$3,297; *Iowa Bird Life* \$10,803, listserv \$486, and Internet service \$140.

Membership: Doug Harr requested \$600 (increase of \$100 from last year). Additional funds requested to make small IOU table displays to distribute strategically around the state to increase awareness the organization. In addition, some clothing supplies need to be replenished.

Records: Ann Johnson requested \$25, unchanged from 2011.

Library/Historical: \$25, no change from 2011. Discussion held regarding the handling of bound paper copies of *Iowa Bird Life* that are held by the current IOU president. Paul Roisen voiced the opinion that due to electronic archival of *IBL* in the Ann Barker library, the need for paper copies to be held by members of the organization is not as important. However, the officers and board want the copies to be preserved. Hank Zaletel will pursue finding out if these copies could be housed at the Iowa State University Library.

Projects/Conservation/Projects: \$5,000 requested, no change from 2011. General discussion held regarding the types of projects that should be considered. Board consensus that the committee trusted with making decisions about worthwhile projects and the expectation recipients would provide a written report to IOU as well as consider presenting at a meeting. Recipients need to provide a written report to IOU at the end of the year, even if the project is not completed.

Meeting Expenses: This is a break even item as income generated from meetings usually meets or exceeds expenses.

Bird Trip Expenses: Even though bird

trips are not active at this time, this line item remains and is a break even item.

Breeding Bird Atlas: \$500 requested, no change from last year.

Officers: Discussed organization's policy regarding check writing. Clarified that the Treasurer ordinarily writes expense checks such as those incurred at spring and fall meetings; however, the President is also authorized to write checks in the Treasurer's absence. Treasurer Hunt will look into the cost of also bonding the President of IOU. Currently, only the Treasurer is bonded. \$610 requested for officer expenses.

Bank, PayPal Fees, Insurance: \$300 requested.

Total insurance: \$650 requested.

Total Operating Expenses budgeted: \$23,636.00.

Motion to approve the balanced budget was made by Don Brown and seconded by Jay Gilliam. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Konrad, secretary

IOU
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2010

	Dec 31, 10
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1150 Checking - 1st Citizens	15,481.86
1250 Savings - 1st Citizens	1,089.44
Total Checking/Savings	16,571.30
Other Current Assets	
1350 CD - 1st Citizens	50,379.88
Total Other Current Assets	50,379.88
Total Current Assets	66,951.18
TOTAL ASSETS	66,951.18
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
Deferred Revenue	180.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	180.00
Total Current Liabilities	180.00
Total Liabilities	180.00
Equity	
3000 General Operating Fund	39,493.73
3300 Memorials	14,271.43
Fund Balances	
3200 Life Membership Fund	8,903.89
3210 Outside Projects Fund	794.60
3400 Publications Fund	4,548.22
Total Fund Balances	14,246.71
Net Income	-1,240.69
Total Equity	66,771.18
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	66,951.18

IOU
Profit & Loss
January through December 2010

	<u>Jan - Dec 10</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
5200 Meeting Income	5,299.00
5300 Merchandise Sales	141.85
5350 Sales - Online	90.63
5450 Silent Auctions	411.00
5500 Breeding Bird Atlas Proj	80.00
5650 "IBL" Donations	100.00
5900 Interest Income	578.54
Donations	
5100 Donations - Unspecified	1,322.00
Total Donations	<u>1,322.00</u>
Dues	
4012 Fledgling Dues	24.00
4020 Goldfinch Dues	4,170.00
4035 Bluebird Dues	3,500.00
4050 Baltimore Oriole Dues	2,450.00
4075 Great Egret Dues	600.00
4100 Osprey Dues	2,400.00
4250 Bald Eagle Dues	500.00
4800 Institutions Dues	808.00
Total Dues	<u>14,452.00</u>
Total Income	<u>22,475.02</u>
Expense	
6200 Meeting Expenses	3,563.62
6600 Insurance-Liability	403.00
6900 Bank & Pay Pal Exp.	232.24
7000 - Other Expense	12.00
Committees	
6708 Committees - Conserv/Proj	8,000.00
Total Committees	<u>8,000.00</u>
Officers	
6840 Officers - Mmbrship Coord	0.00
Total Officers	<u>0.00</u>
Publications	
6100 Publications - IOU News	2,423.35
6110 Publications - IA Bird Lif	7,933.81
6120 Publications -Internet Svc	232.74
6130 Publicaitons - List Serv	486.00
6150 Publications - Software	148.95
Total Publications	<u>11,224.85</u>
Sales Expense	
6300 T-Shirt Sales	280.00
Total Sales Expense	<u>280.00</u>
Total Expense	<u>23,715.71</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-1,240.69</u>
Net Income	<u><u>-1,240.69</u></u>

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Compiled by James J. Dinsmore

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Least Tern fledgling, MidAmerican Energy ponds, Pottawattamie, 15 July 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



Red-headed Woodpecker, Johnson, 25 June 2011. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION: Spring: 18–20 May 2012, Iowa City.

FRONT COVER PHOTO: Piping Plover, Saylorville Res, Polk, 20 July 2011. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

BACK COVER PHOTO: Eastern Bluebird, Boone, 29 June 2011. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

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